PRESCRIPTION FOR THE REST PERIOD, BY ELMER DAVIS

The Saturday Review of Literature

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"THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR"
By Avery Craven
Reviewed by Allan Nevins

"THE EDGE OF THE SWORD"
By Vladimir Pozner
Reviewed by Lon Tinkle

"THE COMMANDOS"
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"BROTHER THE LAUGH IS BITTER"
By Lawrence Lipton
Reviewed by N. L. Rothman

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TWO NOVELISTS AND ONE WAR: Vladimir Pozner (top), author of "The Edge of the Sword," and Elliott Arnold, author of "The Commandos."

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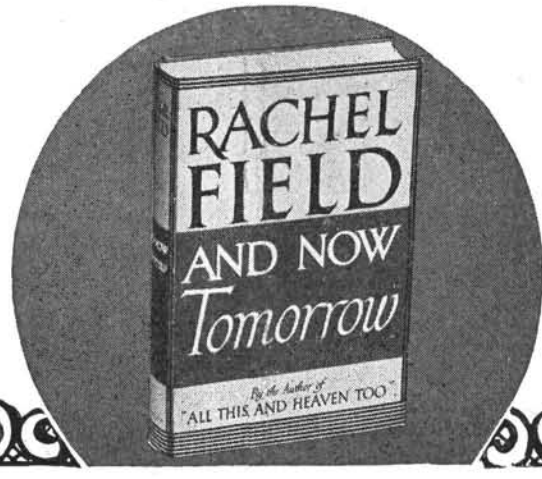

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Prescription for the Rest Period

ELMER DAVIS

MR. HITLER has lately told us that he has had only three days off since the war began. What did he do with them, I wonder? Hang a little wall paper, just to keep his hand in? Or listen to Wagner, played by some successor to Putzi Hanfstaengl? One of them no doubt was the day he spent seeing the sights of Paris, but it would be interesting to know if one of the busiest men of our time prefers active or passive recreation. At any rate, he seems to feel that nobody else is entitled to any more time off than he has had; a view apparently supported by some of the leaders of the recent crusade against the so-called forty-four hour week, who talked as if they wanted a hundred-and-sixty-eight-hour week for others, if not for themselves. However, anybody knows that there is a limit beyond which more work does not mean more production; all of us will produce more if we take a rest occasionally; and those of us who work in fields where the output has a variation in quality that is rare on the assembly line may find that with a proper balance of work and rest we can produce not only more, but better stuff.

So, while the ivory tower as a place of residence is out for the duration, it may still have its uses as a place to spend Saturday or Sunday; especially as, unlike other recreation areas, it can be reached without wearing out your tires. For most of the American people it will be an unfamiliar spot; these twenty years past, the leisure time of the great majority has been spent either in driving a car or in playing golf, pastimes which will not flourish as they used to till some time after the fall of Tokyo and Berlin. Millions of Americans are going to have to find some new and unaccustomed way to spend the day off—some recreation, if possible, that will really recreate, that will take them away from their preoccupations for a while, and send them back to work fresher and fitter.

The answers they will find (and some of them cannot even be guessed at present) will some day make an absorbing chapter in sociology. Bridge may gain new converts; I personally have found it the most completely satisfying of recreations, the one thing that for an hour or two will enable you to forget your own troubles and the world's as well; but that demands an absorption of which only a minority of bridge players are capable. Baseball may flourish more prosperously than its harassed proprietors now believe; its quality will deteriorate as more and more of the younger players are called into service, but it is likely to deteriorate in a fairly even proportion, among the major-league clubs at least; so that even if the play is ragged you will still get close games, and tight pennant races that will draw the crowds. To these and other recreations now unforeseen most people will turn; but it seems not unreasonable to hope that some will turn to the arts, indeed that a fair number will turn to reading, with consequences which in the long run may prove salutary to the national intelligence, as well as to the national morale.

Accordingly we may expect a sudden outpouring of escape literature to meet this need; and there may follow the discovery that not everything labeled "exit" is really a way out. Publishers might profitably devote some thought, in time, as to what really is escape literature in these times and what is not. Their conclusions might save them some deficits, and might prevent the flooding of bookstore counters with a lot of trash; for they might find that the only real escape literature, in such times as these, is good literature. Humor and mystery, the too obvious answers, will serve if they are good enough; so will anything else, if it is good enough.

—From the jacket of "War and Peace," by Tolstoy. (Simon & Schuster).

Mr. George Jean Nathan lately wrote in the *Mercury* that good tragedy is a better escape, even from tragic times, than so-so comedy; to which I can bear corroborative witness. When, on my first day off in months, a day I had hoped to spend in getting away from it all, my family insisted on taking me to "Watch on the Rhine," I thought it would be about as relaxing as the postman's holiday stroll; yet it provided not only a complete escape, but a much needed catharsis of the sort of emotion that accumulates inside you when you must deal every day with bad news. Whereas a musical comedy to which I went last summer in the hope of getting my mind off the Situation provided nothing but three hours of boredom, into which thoughts of the Situation made persistent intrusion.

"Watch on the Rhine," incidentally, filled another long-felt want; Lillian Hellman and Paul Lukas between them gave us a hero who is credible and genuinely heroic, and who is on our side. For twenty years past most of our literature had devoted itself to creating the conviction, which most of the politics of those twenty years reinforced, that anybody who is on our side must be either half-hearted or inadequate. When Count Brancovan got Kurt Mueller in a pocket I supposed he would perish there, gallantly but ineffectually; it never occurred to me that anybody on our side could win. And when Mueller cut his way out, as promptly and efficiently as Kit Carson or Daniel Boone could have done it, I felt precisely the same thrill, though perhaps on a somewhat higher level, that I got

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when I read about exploits of those heroes forty years ago.

Not much literature dealing with these times can give you an escape like that, for not much of it will be good enough. In the literature of the past the percentage of merit may be no higher, but there is more of it; here, too, you can find an escape—if it is good enough. We are fortunate, in this season of defeat and frustration, to have set before us a new edition* of the best of all novels and a new edition of the best of all motion pictures. (All right, brother—if you don't think "War and Peace" and "The Gold Rush" deserve those superlatives, go write a letter to the editor.) Mr. Alfred Kazin has properly protested against the current tendency to read "War and Peace" as a sort of Nostradamus preview of Hitler's campaign in Russia. It is that in some slight degree; but if that is what you want you had better read Caulaincourt's Memoirs, lately recalled to the public attention by Miss Dorothy Thompson. Caulaincourt, by the way, corroborates Tolstoy's interpretation of Borodino; military experts had laughed at it for sixty years till this forgotten manuscript popped up to testify that Tolstoy was right. But he was right about many other things too, things of more general importance and more durable interest. I forget who it was who said that when you read "War and Peace" fiction seems like fact and the life around you like fiction; but so it does, and a good many people are going to find that that is just the kind of book they need in these times.

As for "The Gold Rush," it gives you an hour and a half of pure escape, plus the physical and nervous relaxation engendered by continual belly laughs; but it gives you more than that, if you want more. After seventeen years I see no reason to revise the opinion expressed in these pages when it was first produced, that as art it is worth more than the collected works of Eugene O'Neill. (But try to imagine the sort of solemn Swedes who preferred "Elmer Gantry" to "Babbitt" ever giving Chaplin a Nobel Prize.) Nobody would pretend that Chaplin approaches Tolstoy's stature; but now and then he can strike through, as surely as Tolstoy, to universals—to relations that were as valid, and emotions that were as poignant, in the days of the siege of Troy as in the days of the siege of Corregidor.

But not all classics meet the current need; many readers find that it can better be met by something new than by something they already know by heart. There are many writers who reasonably feel that they can make their best contribution to the national effort by writing something that may, for a few hours, take people's minds away from their troubles; something, but what? In one of the Columbia news rooms, where broadcasts are written to be sent by short wave to Germany and the occupied countries, there is posted a sign: "Is what you are writing worth a man's risking his life to listen to?" The creative writer faces no such test as that; but he must often nowadays wonder whether what he is writing is worth a man's spending his day off to read. Yet the thing can be done, though not easily.

I have lately read two contemporary novels that passed the test—very long novels, at that. (Excuse the reentry of the first person perpendicular; it can hardly be avoided in testimony on esthetics.) About ninety-five per cent of my reading is news, on press association teletypes or similar vehicles; and when I get home at night I usually feel that I ought to spend what spare time may be available on an extension of the news—on one of the books about the Situation. Nevertheless one night I picked up "Islandia," intending to spend ten minutes finding out why Leonard Bacon was so steamed up about it; and I sat up over it, much too late, every night for the next two weeks. And when I had finished "Islandia" I spent another week or more on "Don Pedro and the Devil," to the neglect of the serious books about the Situation.

These novels are serious books, but they are not about the Situation—not this Situation; they deal with the more general situation of Man in a world he never made, and they are perhaps types of what will prove the most useful escape literature. Not that we are ever likely to see another book quite like "Islandia," whose vogue (with all credit given to its very able promotion) may be an episode of war-time psychopathology. For here is a novel longer than "Gone with the Wind" in which there is very little action, in which the characters spend most of their time either in talking over their emotional relationships or in calling on the neighbors. It deals with a wholly imaginary landscape and civilization; and its contrasts with a more familiar world are not with the world of today but with the age of Theodore Roosevelt and Edward VII, which to young people must seem almost as alien as Islandia. Also it has no very sympathetic characters; the Americans are human only when they get into bed and the Islandians are so different from the people we

(*Continued on page* 18)

WAR AND PEACE. By Leo Tolstoy. Inner Sanctum Edition, with a Foreword by Clifton Fadiman. Maps, notes, and epilogues. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1369 pp. $3.

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The Road to Disunion

THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR. By Avery Craven. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1942. 491 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THIS is a book with a thesis; and an interesting and provocative if not altogether original thesis it is. Mr. Craven does not believe, with oldstyle historians like Von Holst and James Ford Rhodes, that political and constitutional controversies did most to generate the heat which sprang into flame with the Civil War. He emphatically does not believe, as do certain writers of the economic-determinist school, that its primary causes lay in the differences between an industrial North and an agrarian South. Mr. Craven holds that the principal roots of the Civil War were emotional in character.

Of course this is fundamentally a view that was held in the Civil War period by a multitude of moderate men. Decrying the utterances of the Northern Abolitionists and the Southern fire-eaters, they declared that the two groups of radicals were using lurid exaggerations and misrepresentations to drag the country into a bloody internecine conflict. That there is much force in this theory that an artificially-generated emotionalism was a primary cause of the war nobody can doubt. But to explain and delimit the imporance of this cause is a difficult task.

Professor Craven gives us by far our best account of the innumerable exaggerations and mendacities of the anti-slavery propagandists on one side, the pro-slavery propagandists on the other. A great moral accusation was angrily stated and still more angrily rebutted. Northerners who knew little about the subject termed slavery cruel and corrupting, and its supporters wicked; Southerners who should have known better extolled slavery as benevolent and uplifting, and assailed industrial capitalism. In each section men arose to caricature and denounce the peculiar features in the civilization of the other section. Each natural crisis was exploited to the utmost in creating prejudice. When stocks of ammunition fell low, crises were wantonly provoked—the Brooks-Sumner affair, the John Brown Raid. Dr. Craven has searched newspaper and magazine files with almost incredible industry, while he has studied Congressional debates and the utterances of political leaders with admirable thoroughness. Public sentiment has been far more searchingly scrutinized, in short, than ever before. The crack-brained ignorance of much of the sectional name-calling, and the selfish wickedness of much more, are mercilessly exposed.

But the book, admirable as it is in this analysis of the distortions which helped to convert a repressible conflict (as Dr. Craven believes) into an irrepressible one, is not at all points convincing. It is quite true that a long-continued campaign of miseducation, partly systematic, partly impulsive, did much to create the breach that led to Civil War. But were there not counterbalancing factors of importance? Were the two sections equally guilty? And were this distortion and miseducation the chief cause, or even *a* chief cause, of the war?

If there was much exaggeration, there was also much moderation; if much miseducation, much sane and careful education. Mr. Craven neglects the repeated and vigorous efforts of a host of sagacious men, North and South, to compromise differences, to soften and minimize conflicts, and to diffuse a fraternal spirit. He does nothing like justice to the activities of most of the great Whig leaders, and especially the Northerners who braved the opprobrious epithet of Cotton Whigs, in trying to patch up the sectional quarrel; nothing like justice to the large body of moderate newspapers so ably represented by Raymond and the New York *Times,* and by Seaton and the *National Intelligencer*—journals which worked to the end for sectional understanding and peace; nothing like justice to such men as F. L. Olmsted and Elihu Burrit, who labored for a *constructive* treatment of the slavery question. He fails to do justice to the courageous efforts of such Southern leaders as Alexander H. Stephens in Georgia, Henry Foote in Mississippi, and B. F. Perry and Petigru in South Carolina, in laboring for conciliation and adjustment. There was a propaganda of hate, but there was also a propaganda of friendship and reason. We cannot properly assess the former without understanding the latter. The proponents of fraternity and understanding probably did their work much better than anybody would guess from Dr. Craven's pages. No student of the jockeying, manoeuvring, and scheming required—along with a whole chapter of accidents—to bring about Southern secession, can doubt that majority opinion remained fairly sound.

And were the two sections equally guilty in this matter of emotional bias? Dr. Craven writes as if they were. As a matter of fact, it was not the North which declared it would not accept the result of a perfect constitutional election—it was the South. It was not the North which left a Union that had worked very well for seventy-odd years—it was the South. One might suspect from these elementary facts that the South had less control over its emotions than the North. But Dr. Craven seems anxious to hold the scales in a way favorable to the Southerners. He makes the startling assertion: "In most ways the life and labor of the slave were much like those of other American workers." He tells us that slavery offered "most of the incentives to honest and sustained effort, to a contented, well-rounded life." A little later on he treats the Republican Party of 1856-60 as practically synonymous with the Abolitionists. That is, he tells us that "the non-extensionist had taken over the abolitionists' cause, bag and

(*Continued on page* 17)

—*Cartoon from "Harper's Weekly," December 1st, 1860, from "A History of the United States," by James Truslow Adams.*

"Oh! Ain't we sorry!!!"

What the old world tyrants think of secession.

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Pozner . . .

THE EDGE OF THE SWORD. By Vladimir Pozner. Translated from the French by Haakon M. Chevalier. New York: Modern Age Books. 1942. 342 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by LON TINKLE

WITH a hard, agate-like brilliance of style, a bald notation of fact, and an oblique approach all strangely reminiscent of Hemingway, Vladimir Pozner evokes the six weeks of confusion in France just before the collapse of June, 1940. There is nothing new about the subject matter of "The Edge of the Sword," there is no clarification of the reasons for France's downfall, but this book is decidedly different from its host of predecessors in two important respects. In mood, this volume is neither lyric nor epic, but dramatic, sometimes with an over-tone of Olympian humor; and its emphasis is not political, but narrative. As narrative, it is a virtuosic performance.

With one tour de force succeeding another in his fictional account Vladimir Pozner is at the farthest removed from the personal intensity of Saint-Exupéry, the desperate and mystical resignation of Feuchtwanger, the epic mood of Hans Habe, or even the angry social rage of Elliott Paul's last vision of the rue de la Huchette. Although cast in the form of fiction, his book is a report, an artist's report, without attempt at direct interpretation. The interpretation is there, without any doubt, but Pozner doesn't give it to you in statement. He lets it rise obliquely from the sparks struck in your mind by the impact of his overwhelming choice of facts, of raw sensations, of stabbing details. There is only one exception to this slanting technique, an important one: it is that the officers, the officers of the French army, take all the blame here, and in no equivocal terms.

The officers don't figure as central characters in this story, with the exception of the fear-ridden Colonel Carvin, but they are responsible for its events by their fantastically stupid orders to fifteen or so tank-drivers and truck-drivers whose bitter-tempered but loyal effort to carry out these orders makes the framework of Pozner's novel. Nowhere is the author's virtuosic talent more evident than in this original concept of his story: the interlocking of these destinies, their unexpected re-encounters, their separations, their hopeless confusion, all this in a pattern that symbolizes the drifting, the desperate makeshifts, the pursuit of absent leadership, the crazy unreality that characterized the last days of France. The author's triumph has been to leave in the wake of a clear and intelligible account a lasting impression of life without pattern or meaning.

Margaret Shedd

Yet the principal character of the story is a man of lucidity and competence. This is the revolutionary Caillol, a truck-driver who is commandeered as his personal chauffeur by Colonel Carvin. Caillol is under suspicion for distributing propaganda pamphlets and is the special target of Bissières of the Armaments Control Board, an industrialist whose one aim in life is to liquidate every remnant of the Popular Front of 1936. Bissières denounces Caillol to Colonel Carvin; but good drivers are scarce and the Colonel delays handing over his excellent chauffeur until his own skin is safe. The conflict between Caillol and Colonel Carvin is the central symbol of the book. Carvin is the career militarist, the archetype of bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In this crisis he is dependent upon the man who represents, more than the Germans, what he most fears in the world. Shall he lift the loaded revolver concealed between his knees and puncture the brain of the revolutionary in the driver's seat, or shall he act on his faith that upon this man's hardihood and cleverness depends his own survival?

Just as the conflict between these two is symbolic, so is Caillol's salvation freighted with meaning. In the end, Colonel Carvin is a washed-up derelict; Caillol alone knows what he is living for, he alone has a vestige of hope. This is a worker's war, he tells himself, and adds, "this is only the beginning."

Pozner's preoccupation with Caillol doubtless explains the notable absence in "The Edge of the Sword" of any national feeling for France.

The name of Haakon M. Chevalier is a guarantee of the kind of translation that becomes re-creation.

Shedd . . .

HURRICANE CAYE. By Margaret Shedd. New York: Harper & Bros. 1942. 309 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

THIS first novel reveals an original and striking new talent among contemporary American novelists. Margaret Shedd is unashamedly a stylist; she has a fierce love of exactness and knows the value of cadence. Her vocabulary ranges from the slightly unusual to the astounding, never drops to the trite and banal. There are majestic passages of polyphonic prose, which just escape the turgidity and pretentiousness which usually attend such literary flights. There is nothing homely or tranquil about her pages; hers is a storming pen that proves itself master of the violence of hurricane and the passionate human soul, which she fastens down securely with powerful phrase and word.

The novel's tempestuous and exotic background of Central American jungle and hurricane-tormented shores demands a savage style. It is Robinson Jeffers's hostile Carmel country without its crags and boulders; against its violence the lush orchid, gardenia, and breadfruit tree are stagily tawdry and silly, like florid properties of cheap romance. "Hurriçane Caye" can not be subtitled "The Lure of Tropic Seas" or "The Romance of the Jungle."

Perhaps only a Conrad could create characters and story able to stand up to such a tremendous background and such magnificent writing. The heroine and her three men are civilized (perhaps over-civilized) and intellectual, but essentially as dull and inconsequential as Nina Leeds and her trio. Introverts all, they stew in the juices of introspection, engage in bouts of tortuous self-analysis that usually turn out to be old-fashioned self-pity. They explore and dissect and rummage among their emotions until we come to the conclusion that their love refuses to burst into flame, not because they keep it controlled and smoldering, but because their boiling point is abnormally and ludicrously high.

"Hurricane Caye" will be enjoyed by readers who relish good writing which never quite degenerates into fine writing. The author is at her best in communicating the exhiliarating and lyric beauty of flight, and in the breath-taking account of a ferocious tropical storm which leaves the reader all but exhausted.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

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Waugh . . .

—*Davey, London.*

Evelyn Waugh

PUT OUT MORE FLAGS. By Evelyn Waugh. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1942. 286 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

IT is very tempting to "discover" in Basil Seal, the protagonist of Evelyn Waugh's latest novel, a kinship with Clovis Sangrail. Perhaps Mr. Waugh is indebted to Saki, but it would not be wise for his reviewer to make too much of this. The difference between the two writers is far more interesting than any debt that the younger may—possibly—owe to the older. The charm of Saki lies in his abiding immaturity. He never grew up. His worldly style—like a crystal—encloses but does not conceal a vein of childish cruelty. Evelyn Waugh is not cruel in that sense nor irresponsible in that sense, though a superficial reading of this novel might lead one to believe that both words applied to it. He is writing about a society which has afforded him a great deal of amusement and which he heartily dislikes. He is eminently a mature artist. In all his novels—and I think that they are among the most original novels of our time—he has always sought to discover the *lacrimae rerum;* and we should not take him any the less seriously because he makes his discovery with a fleer.

"Put Out More Flags" comes less close to tragedy than do some of his earlier books, because the characters are no longer involved in a personal dilemma. The joke was always on them, but now they have no answer; and when they have no answer they cease to be persons. The world is at war in this novel, and—wriggle as they will—they can find no place for themselves in it. They are not persons any more, but just unhappy examples of a bad and silly society. They are out of date and therefore dead.

Thus Basil Seal, who is a predatory young man and a professional outcast, finds that it is one thing to be an outcast in a world of peace and quite another to be an outcast in a world at war. Seriousness is his greatest enemy, and, from the moment that war breaks out, it begins to threaten him. For the first months, it is true, England was still not very serious; and it was possible for Basil to make his way. There was the Ministery of Information to be approached with a scheme for annexing Liberia; and there was money to be made by taking a trio of impossible *evacués* from one country house to another and demanding a bribe before removing them. Even Military Intelligence received Basil for a while—long enough for him to lay false evidence against one of his oldest friends. It is all quite hilarious and all rather horrible.

To allow these people to behave on their own terms, and condemn themselves out of their own mouths, is a dangerous procedure: the book may be—perhaps will be—deliberately misunderstood. In "Put Out More Flags," however, the apparently heartless jesting reveals a bitter attack upon the society which made Basil Seal possible in the first place; upon false internationalism, official pomposity, selfishness, blindness, greed, betrayal. It is all very lightly done, but it should not be lightly construed. Just at the end, though, there is a false note. Mr. Waugh has Basil say: "There's only one serious occupation for a chap now, that's killing Germans." It is quite impossible for Basil to say this, because Basil is a state of mind not a human being; he is, as Mr. Waugh writes in his Dedicatory Letter, a "ghost." By the end of the book Mr. Waugh has successfully consigned Basil to Limbo; and by snatching him back at the last moment, he ceases to be an artist and becomes a sentimentalist. But this is a transitory fault in a brilliant and telling book.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 426)

DON MARQUIS:
AS IT LOOKS TO ARCHY
(from Archy's *life of mehitabel*)

where o where is babylon
. . . . . .
i look forward to the day
when the human race is done
and we insects romp and play
freely underneath the sun
and no roach paste is scattered
about anywhere i got another jolt
of it
last night.

Foster . . .

—*Louis Werner.*

Elizabeth Foster

THE DAYS BETWEEN. By Elizabeth Foster. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1942. 301 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by DON LINCOLN

ELIZABETH FOSTER is a victim of her own facility in this book. It would be hard to find writing that combines such a natural instinct for utterance with such uncritical perception of lapses from taste, from mood. This defect in taste must be pointed out because it seems to be basic in the failure of this bright novel to be impressive. So basic, indeed, that one wonders at the legitimacy of choosing "the last days of France" as material for a "romantic novel" (or, to be more accurate than the blurb, as material for formula-fiction). This is a tale of refugees who bear only the remotest resemblance to those described in the first-hand reports currently so available.

The fictional refugees of Miss Foster leave Paris in early June, 1940 and are forced to spend three days in a deserted old chateau on the road to Bordeaux. These refugees are wealthy and internationally famous. They include a famous French munitions-maker and his mistress, one of the great couturières; a noted English singer and her rich but communist husband; an American architect, who looks "like Gary Cooper" to the last member of the party, Solange, niece of the communist and daughter of a distinguished British statesman.

In the space of three days, this hardly typical group suffers the starvation, anxieties, and boredom of being suddenly uprooted. But despite aching feet, empty stomachs, weary minds, they are never refugees from their habitual preoccupation, love, or perhaps we should say l'Amour. Solange and Alex, the American, are re-

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latively new to each other but they agonize over their mutual hostility, while all the time the others (and the reader) have clearly seen that their antagonism is but a sign of the divinely sweet torment. The alleged communist discovers that his much-admired wife is really devoted to him, and the munitions-maker decides to make of Marthe an honest woman, telling her so, however, only after she has nobly resolved to offer him his total freedom.

So far, so good. These puppet characters fit adroitly into their inventive but artificial crises. If they would only stay there, one might accept them and the book as a "romantic novel of the last days of France." But they are treated as symbols and deliver themselves of much reckless musing on the collapse of France, the meaning of love, the failure of democracy, and the dangers of social experiment (the communist is meant, in this character it's deliberate, to be contemptible). You gather that all Frenchmen drink too much and are otherwise immoral, that all Americans are "soft" but swift to harden under stress, that all communists are lacking in integrity, and a variety of other current dogmatic and facile judgments.

In style, Miss Foster, is frequently effective, despite her careless grammar and her amazing preference for unrelieved simple sentences, in the grammatical sense. But all of this adds up merely to a novel sold to Hollywood in advance of publication.

Arnold . . .

THE COMMANDOS. By Elliott Arnold. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. 1942. 300 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by R. E. PORTER

NERVE war is recoiling upon its Nazi exponents in different form these days.

Some five thousand cold *practitioners* of guerilla warfare have been putting into effect a skillfully devised strategy of terror which has shaken Nazi confidence and inspired howls of rage among the bigwigs; created an unpleasantly heavy demand on Nazi resources in terms of detached immobilized divisions, masses of weapons, and extra work in fortifications construction generally from the North Cape to the Spanish border; inspired hope among millions of the oppressed; and instilled dread in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of German soldiers who don't know when or where the Commandos will strike next.

Elliott Arnold, that brilliant feature writer for the *New York World Telegram,* has turned out a grimly realistic novel about these "butcher-and-bolt" boys and their terrorizing hell-for-leather, slam-bang night invasions, planned with the stealthy calculations of Indian raids and executed with the bludgeon force of gang assassinations.

While his details of the rigid training and merciless forays of the Commandos are authentic, the author has included Americans, Poles, Norwegians, Free French, and other nationalities among their membership, whereas the organization actually comprises only men of the regular British Army and Royal Marines.

However, such novelist's license in no wise detracts from the vividness of the story. Perhaps it intensifies it, for inclusion in the *dramatis personae* of representatives of the oppressed peoples provides a more convincing motivation for the determination and fanatical disregard of danger which characterize Commando efforts to wreak vengeance on the Nazis. "Turned and ground and polished to a fine edge was their hate . . . and the ideal Commando was a man whose mother, wife, and children had been killed at the same time by the same Nazi bomb."

The likable hero of "The Commandos" is Alan Lowell, a young American lieutenant—an idealist who fought fascism in Spain, then joined up with the British, and eventually became a leader of destructive Commando raids against Nazi concentrations in Norway.

At Stavenger is attractive Fru Nicole Larsen, widow of a wealthy Norwegian sardine canner, who is in love with Alan, with whom she had enjoyed a brief *affaire* in Budapest. Publicly regarded as a female Quisling, because Nazi officers use her home as a drinking hangout, Nick actually is head of the Underground in that area.

When Dichter begins to link repeated Commando attacks with military information imparted to his mistress, Nick appeals to the Commandos to execute the Nazi Captain in order to divert suspicion from her people and herself and avert reprisals.

Alan gets the job and his undercover adventures in Norway, where he and Nick are reunited, represent about as thrilling reading as has come out of the war.

"The Commandos" has a Steinbeckish flavor in its telling and the background is reminiscent of "The Moon Is Down," with its accurately depicted Norwegians resolutely sacrificing life and liberty to sabotage the Nazi war effort, repay in kind and with interest the savageries of Hitler's soldiers, and break the shackles of their bondage.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

POETS AND THEIR SIDELINES

Many poets had more than one "line," says Alice G. Crowell, of Los Angeles, California. From the brief descriptions of their other occupations given here, can you identify these famous poets? Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 18.

1. A successful physician and professor of anatomy.
2. A painter of note, co-founder and leader of the Pre-Raphaelite group.
3. An experienced sailor, with many voyages before the mast to his credit.
4. A musician, he was a performer in an orchestra and a composer.
5. Editor for fifty years of the New York *Evening Post.*
6. World-renowned sculptor, painter, and architect.
7. A soldier, England's chivalric knight par excellence.
8. A farmer, struggling with unrewarding Scottish soil.
9. Statesman, explorer, and colonizer.
10. Practically a professional thief.
11. Ruler of a powerful Italian city-state of the fifteenth century.
12. An Anglican preacher, the foremost of his day.
13. A volunteer nurse in the Civil War, which service greatly influenced his poetry.
14. Our minister to two foreign capitals.
15. Ace aviator for his country in World War I.
16. An Oriental king.
17. A modern wandering minstrel who sang his own songs for his supper.
18. A highly skilled craftsman in architecture, interior decoration, and design.
19. A very famous mathematician and astronomer.
20. At present in charge of the Library of Congress and the Office of Facts and Figures.

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Brown . . .

WAVE HIGH THE BANNER. By Dee Brown. Philadelphia: Macrae-Smith-Company. 1942. 367 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PAUL ENGLE

THE writting of this book has failed to answer to its materials. The life of Davy Crockett was dramatic and varied, full of humor, of action, of movement, of color. The style of "Wave High the Banner" has little of all these. It jogs on, seldom responding to the event, seldom quickening pace when concerned with sudden violence, seldom taking on dignity or largeness when describing the magnificent areas of country over which Davy hunted and fought. There is a solid level of narration. There are incidents whose natural vigor forces a momentary energy on the writing, such as the siege of the Alamo and some of Davy's political speeches. But these would be exciting no matter how told.

The basic fault is a constant ordinariness of word. The author seems to feel, with so many writers of historical fiction, that the events are enough in themselves, and he need not worry over the manner of his telling. Nowhere in this book, full as it is of extraordinary events and characters, are there remarkable phrase or sentences. The retelling of a well-known story demands that the writer contribute some new angle of imagination. There must be not merely a reworking but a recreation. Here the written text pulls down the original legend to drabness. The book is crammed with the outworn—blood throbs like a drum, an Indian is in "mortal terror," a Virginia road "wound like a snake," the thought of home is a "golden dream." Surely this trite language is a wrong and misleading medium to convey the whole taste and texture of a vigorous frontier life.

There is too little real creation of character. Davy is much the same when working as an ignorant farmhand as when addressing the Whig leaders of New York and Philadelphia. His personality fails to develop as his life becomes more complex.

What virtue can be found in the book? As a romanticized yarn it is agreeable and rapid. Many of the minor characters are genuine individuals, like Abram Henry, the fiddle player who campaigned with Davy, the gambler Thimblerig who died in the Alamo, the early Washington female commentator Anne Royall, Billy Finley, the old mountaineer who collected herbs that would cure all ailments but his own. Throughout the dialogue is surprisingly alert and natural. Yet the book lacks both the directness of the so-called "autobiography" of Davy Crockett, and the fantasy of the Crockett Almanacs. There is little of the "tall tale" quality, the wild humor and the exaggerated deed have been cut out. What is left is a more straightforward, cleaned-up story, lacking the zest and vigor of the original.

Gladys Schmitt

Inglis-Jones . . .

THE LOVING HEART. By Elizabeth Inglis-Jones. New York: Julian Messner, Inc. 1942. 320 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by CURRIE CABOT

THIS pleasant novel, brings the pulse of life to one of those odd, and never, to the outside world, quite understandable situations —a man's marriage to a woman very much his senior. Miss Inglis-Jones tells her story without sentimentality. Susie, a dear round little woman, who lives in a house like a tea-caddy down a country lane, marries (not without misgivings) an impetuous, charming, and infinitely nice young man named Timothy Compton. Her misgivings—thanks to Miss Inglis-Jones, who lets her down very, very gently—are never quite realized, but the dreadful aftermath of such a marriage is nevertheless clearly shown.

There is, besides a difference in age, a difference in class between Susie and Timothy. Susie is so innately sweet and genuine, so much a lady in intrinsic feeling, Timothy so wholeheartedly devoted to her, that it is at first barely apparent. Timothy, moreover, has sought refuge in Susie's simple, homely niceness as a reaction from the brittle sophistication, the complete looseness, of his own family, whose lives seem to taint even the peace and loveliness of the beautiful old manor-houses of Compton Ashley.

Miss Inglis-Jones draws the different types of her novel with a skilful pencil; they are full length portraits which have warm and abundant life.

Schmitt . . .

THE GATES OF AULIS. By Gladys Schmitt. New York: The Dial Press. 1942. 652 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by RICHARD R. PLANT

HERE is a first novel with an enormous wealth of emotions, an unceasing stream of ideas, a torrent of tortures of the mind and body, all clothed in language highly artistic if overrich in similes and poetic images. The poesies sometimes run away with the contents, the language goes on its own, so to speak, and page after page is filled with the remembrance of an afternoon of love, or a night of bleak agony.

The story proper does not matter. Even the main characters, I daresay, don't matter much. What matters to the author is to penetrate deep into the anguish which racks young and sensitive people in our time, in particular to reveal unremittingly the frustrations and pains which are the life of Carl and Ellie Hasselmann.

Their town is an industrial city, perhaps Pittsburgh; the Hasselmanns are children of an honest petit-bourgeois family. Ellie is a painter, and it must be said to the author's credit, she convinces us that Ellie's paintings are good and meaningful, even though it takes her sometimes three pages to convey the idea of one of the painfully wrought canvases. Ellie's love affair with the elderly Mr. McVeagh fills a good part of the novel, and the author does not shy away from a very detailed description. Not that Miss Schmitt goes in for vulgarity, though she knows how to handle tough language, if necessary, but she describes without hesitations and inhibitions the maelstrom of Ellie's emotions, her fears, fevers, and enchantments of soul and body.

Carl, her scientific minded brother, gives himself to sociology and to the diabolically fascinating Professor Maurer who finally confesses to fascism, a fascism, however, which is hardly recognizable as such. Both Carl and Ellie are disappointed at the end and rather wretched. Miss Schmitt's figures search in the past to find the key to the torturing present. I daresay they enjoy the tortures.

Thirty-seven pages for one afternoon of talk is too much for any author, unless he is a second Goethe. Miss Schmitt, very conscientious and overflowing with ideas, describes each move every character makes. There is no doubt, however, that her's is an unusual talent, the talent of artistic writing and poetic vision. For a first novel, 'The Gates of Aulis" is overwhelmingly adult.

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Lipton . . .

BROTHER, THE LAUGH IS BITTER. By Lawrence Lipton. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1942. 309 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

I MUST confess that I have already seen several reviews of this book, most of them to the effect that it is very good, very strong, but this is not the time, no bitterness now, too one-sided, perhaps not in the best of taste. With all of this I heartily disagree. Bitter it is, as bitter a harsh laugh as has been uttered about the Jews in a big city. Only one question has to be asked about this: is it justifiable? Is Lipton making capital of a provocative and tender subject, or is he saying something not only true but pertinent? Each reader will have to decide about Lipton's sincerity for himself; for my money he's one hundred per cent honest, and his book is one of those barbaric yawps that belong in the American tradition.

Lawrence Lipton

But as to pertinence, I can see no room for disagreement. If we're fighting about anything at all it is about minorities, about man's inhumanity to man, about democracy, about the right to live. Let's not pretend, then, that these are things one must impress upon one's enemies, while at home we'd best not be too loud about them. Anti-Semitism is an American virus as well as a European one, and its workings, here in particular upon one Max Levinsky, make a hard and unpleasant tale. Levinsky is no nobleman by any means, just a shrewd, ambitious, lusty, kicking, and scratching city-dweller, trying to survive and enjoy it too. But there is one card in the deck stacked against him, and everybody plays it: in a pinch he's a despised alien. It boils down to a lot of melodrama—sex, death, suicide, other things—but you will remember a harsh light cast upon the whole turbulent scene, Chicago just under the surface. This is something straight from the shoulder.

"I observe, sir," said my man Dodsley, as he was polishing the bread knife in preparation for a commando exercise with the Home Guard, "that a coming book about conditions in Italy is described as being written 'by a *bona fide* secret agent.' Is one to infer from this, sir, that the author is an Old School Spy?"

—*"The Bookseller," London.*

Croy . . .

FAMILY HONEYMOON. By Homer Croy. New York: Harper & Bros. 1942. 313 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RALPH CROWLEY

AGAIN Homer Croy chooses the Midwest for the background of his new novel—a simple yarn about naive, uncomplicated folks. When a youngish widow, about to remarry and fussily solicitous about her four children, informs her college professor husband-to-be that the honeymoon is off unless the children go along, he reluctantly consents. Most of the novel is a collection of assorted misadventures arising from the unconventional family journey. The children fight and get lost, various misunderstandings arise, and the newlyweds are denied even a fragment of privacy on their extended honeymoon. Frustrated and exasperated as mishaps multiply, they are about to separate, but a cloudburst of good luck at the end washes away all misunderstandings and difficulties.

The story is so thin and tenuous as to be almost one-dimensional. The characters are shadowy figures of a quiet farce, who have only a sort of comic-strip reality. There is perhaps too much restraint in the humor (we wish at times that the novelist would pull out the stops); in fact what he achieves is good humor. But it is not quite all sweetness and light: Aunt Jo is there with wry and cynical comments on human behavior. It is a bit startling to find Ilka Chase west of the water tower. If the story lacks bounce and vigor, it has Homer Croy's sound, if negative, virtues to sustain it. There is no synthetic cleverness, no archness in the humor, and the surface detail is right. Many readers will welcome a warm novel in which all the characters are treated sympathetically. Even the siren is never slinky, only gauche and stupid.

In "Family Honeymoon" lie innocently all the materials for a risqué farce by some carefree disciple of Avery Hopwood. Some readers will be relieved to learn that it has already been dramatized by Owen Davis.

Daly . . .

SEVENTEENTH SUMMER. By Maureen Daly. New York: Dodd Mead & Co. 1942. 255 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by REBECCA LOWRIE

THIS is the first prize winner of the Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship. It's author is a senior at Rosary College in Chicago, and her photograph on the jacket indicates that her own seventeenth summer has had only a few successors. Her book is very appealing. There is no effort to recapture the emotions of youth, or to give them the dewy touch of sentiment with which even elderly people in their thirties like to caress their memories. The seventeenth summer in a perfectly charming little girl's life writes itself in her own words from the June evening when Angie Morrow and Jack Duluth first smiled at each other in McKnight's drug store, to the August morning when she said "'Bye Jack" and started away to school. After that first evening Jack asked Angie to go sailing; and her mother said yes. It was fun, sailing. And Jack, smelling of ivory soap, told Angie things about himself, and his family: "You know, all my life I've wanted to know about beautiful things—to be cultured. Maybe that sounds funny to you. I haven't any background or anything." He worked in a bakery and he played guard on the High School basket ball team. There were many more dates, cokes, dancing to juke box music, picnics. There was an almost disastrous Sunday dinner at the Morrow's when Jack had trouble with the salad bowl and Angie's college sister Lorraine talked about "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" and William Saroyan . . . and there was the black time when Angie went out with Tony, who was "fast" and who found her restful.

Maureen Daly

Not all smooth, this seventeenth summer, but it is recorded that a limpid honesty and simplicity that makes novels about adolescence seem pontifical and phony. Angie Morrow and Jack Duluth are the young people for whom the world should be made free—and beautiful.

The gift of a large collection of books, periodicals and manuscripts by and about Frank Harris is announced by the New York Public Library. The collection numbers between 1,500 and 1,600 items.

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Inside Japan

GOODBYE JAPAN. By Joseph Newman. New York: L. B. Fischer. 1942. 338 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MARK GAYN

WHY did Japan go to war with Britain and the United States? The current crop of books on Japan offers two explanations: one, the Nazis browbeat the Japanese into armed action; the other, the Japanese are maniacs, who have an inherent desire for aggression. Both explanations are unfortunate, for the first is childish, the second dangerously misleading.

The only exception this season was George E. Taylor's "America in the New Pacific," which gave the political and economical motivations in Japan's behavior the important place they properly deserved. To this minority of one add now the name of Joseph Newman, the former correspondent in Japan for the *New York Herald Tribune,* whose sparkling and forceful "Goodbye Japan" has just made its bow.

Newman does not deny the importance of psychological factors in the molding of Japan's public mind and policies. He rightly observes that the mystic balderdash of Japan's "mission," preached for the past half a century by her farsighted, canny empire builders, has completely warped the thinking of the Japanese man-in-the-street. His chapter on the doctrine of "Hakko Ichiu"—"eight corners of the world under one (Japanese) roof"—is a startling revelation of the point reached both by the Japanese ambition and mentality.

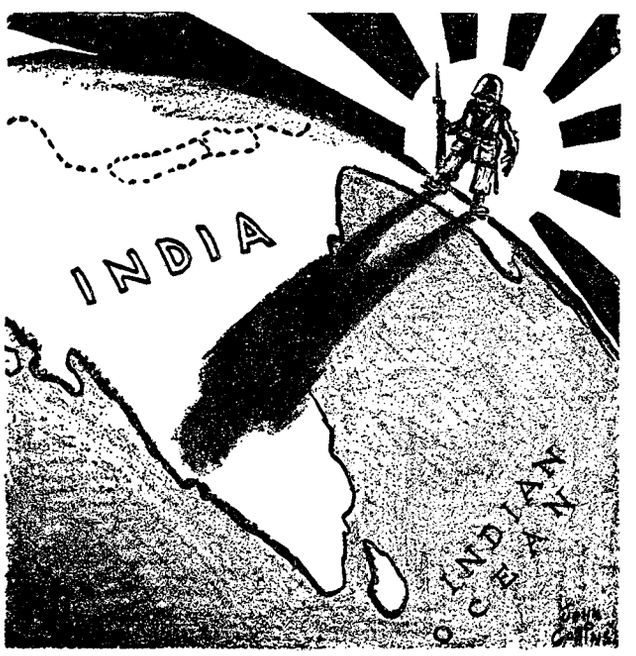
"Hakko Ichiu," however, is only one of the products of empire-building, not its cause—and Newman makes this point clear beyond all doubt. The mystic nonsense took a firm grip on Japan only after she began to expand—not before. The much-ignored economics lay at the basis of Japan's aggression, and Big Business was one of the Unholy Trinity which inspired and paid for the new conquests. Its partner was the Army, which sought to retain political influence by new wars. Their mutual puppet was the emperor, through whom the generals and big businessmen controlled the masses.

Unlike the bulk of the current books on the Orient, Newman's is not a rehash of old articles but a fresh picture of Japan on the eve of the war. When he goes back to facts already known, it is only to fill out the necessary background or to provide a fresh interpretation. His chapter on "Rice, Rickets and Rackets" is a striking account of war-rooted poverty sapping Japan's moral, physical, and economic fiber. He emphasizes, however, that the Japanese man-in-the-street can tighten his belt a great deal more before he is driven into a revolt.

Equally interesting is Newman's account of the struggle between Big Business and the Army in 1940-41, and Prince Konoye's strange role in the internal tug-of-war. Newman describes Konoye as a "distinguished political blunderer and weakling" with a "confused, bewildered and sickly mind," whose main achievement was to solve the conflict between the two warring partners of the Unholy Trinity. In achieving this, however, he had shipwrecked both his own ambitious plans and his career.

One of Newman's startling revelations is that the original design for aggression, decided at an imperial conference on July 2, 1941, was to seize completely Indo-China, attack Russia, and then turn to the South Seas in the order named. The plan broke down when the Germans failed to reach the Volga by the end of July.

Enough has been said to indicate the excellence of "Goodbye Japan." It is an exciting, thoughtful, and informative account of a foe at war.



The Shadow Lengthens —*Montreal Gazette.*

JAPAN—A WORLD PROBLEM. By H. J. Timperley. New York: John Day Co. 1942. 160 *pp.* $1.75.

Reviewed by MARY E. KERSEY

WITH this book Mr. Timperley, Australian newspaperman, has achieved conciseness of approach toward a problem complex in its ramifications, and opened the impenetrable labyrinths of Japanese history and psychology heretofore unknown and obscure to most. In almost startling contrast to his earlier "Japanese Terror in China," his present book proves that Timperley can, as some were inclined to doubt, present a well-integrated, carefully documented work, as well as one journalistically brilliant.

"The history of Japan is ten centuries of legends, seven centuries of copying and uncopying the Chinese, eight centuries of feudalism, and something over half of one century of capitalism." Around this theme Timperley builds the historical, psychological, and geo-political explanations for Japan's status today as world nuisance No. 1.

With an admirable deftness Timperley manages to thread together all the strange and diverse elements which form the Japanese mind and psyche into a single, fanatic entity. Legendary Japan evolved into actuality when an awakening island people set about to copy as much as possible from their continental neighbors. Timperley advances the theory that history repeats itself since the same copying has taken place in the case of modern Japan. It was only 100 years ago that Japan awoke from her second deep sleep of isolation, and began a feverish period of copying of foreign ways and methods. This time instead of adopting Chinese culture they looked to the West. This type of false-bottomed civilization, according to Timperley, accounts for Japan's maladjustment among the nations of the world, and explains her concomitant necessity of warring upon them.

Just how different is the Japanese cast of thought from ours is shown clearly throughout the entire book. In grammar school we learned that in Japan everything worked "backward." It is not only books that read backward but . . . everything. Timperley sets each item in our occidental set of values in juxtaposition with almost diametrically opposed Japanese conceptions, *i.e.*—We believe in the right of individual expression, the supremacy of the individual will. Japanese believe in subjugation of individual will, bending its dictates to those of an artificially

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created "imperial absolute," etc., ad nauseum.

A peculiar and sinister superficiality has pervaded the ideas and policy of generations of Japanese ruling cliques. Glibness in cloaking the blackest moves in an aura of benevolent intentions has characterized every presentation of Japanese foreign policy since the beginning of its existence. In this they have victimized their own people and rendered them unable to conceive the truth as we know it. An idea or policy is believed sound by Japs only until it has served their purposes. After this it is discredited. One day it may be politic to extoll the virtues of isolationism—a policy of live-and-let-live; the next day isolationism will be abandoned with a battery of excuses for expansionism.

This utter lack of integrity or ability to respect the truth is characteristic of all systems of people whose designs include encroachment upon the freedoms of others. The same type of mental dishonesty prevails among the Nazis. It is this machiavellian deftness for word-twisting and concept-twisting that renders the designs of the Japs and the Nazis good reading for all those who believe in the universality of good intentions.

It is a book to break the last of our illusions about the Japs. There are still among those present a few who believe that had the world been "less harsh" to the unfortunate Japanese, they would not have been forced into the drastic moves they are accomplishing so neatly today. Timperley's presentation of facts and shrewd conjectures anent the motivation and policies which have shaped the pattern of today's Japan rule out tendencies to sentimentalize about the plight of the Japs. It is theirs because they made it that way. A people whose social scheme is built around principles exactly in reverse of those of Western civilization are forced either to challenge those Western principles or to accept them. The Japanese mind, says Timperley, was incapable of accepting them: thus the head-on collision.

As for a post-war Japan, Timperley explores the possibility of what complete economic collapse would mean, since an allied victory would spell immediate ousting of all Jap interests from the mainland. Timperley's objectivity towards Japan is demonstrated by his theory that the economic rejuvenation of Japan would require a complete social upheaval to rid the country of her present ruling clique. With room allowed for those leaders with genuine democratic ideologies to re-mould Japan into a state acceptable to the rest of the world she can expect to receive assurances of economic freedom.

The Coming Russo-Japanese War

RUSSIA AND JAPAN. By Maurice Hindus. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1942. 254 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by LINTON WELLS

MAURICE HINDUS and this reviewer were among the few who ventured to stick their necks out last June 21 and forecast rather dogmatically that the Soviet Union would be the scene of Hitler's Waterloo. Knowing the Russians as we do, we felt quite safe in taking the risk and Mr. Hindus recorded the reasons for his belief—and reflected my own—in a convincing volume "Hitler Cannot Conquer Russia."

Now Maurice Hindus has come forth with another prophecy in his meritorious "Russia and Japan" and we see eye-to-eye again regarding an irrepressible conflict between these two nations. Only a sudden Jap collapses would prevent it and that, unfortunately, doesn't seem to impend.

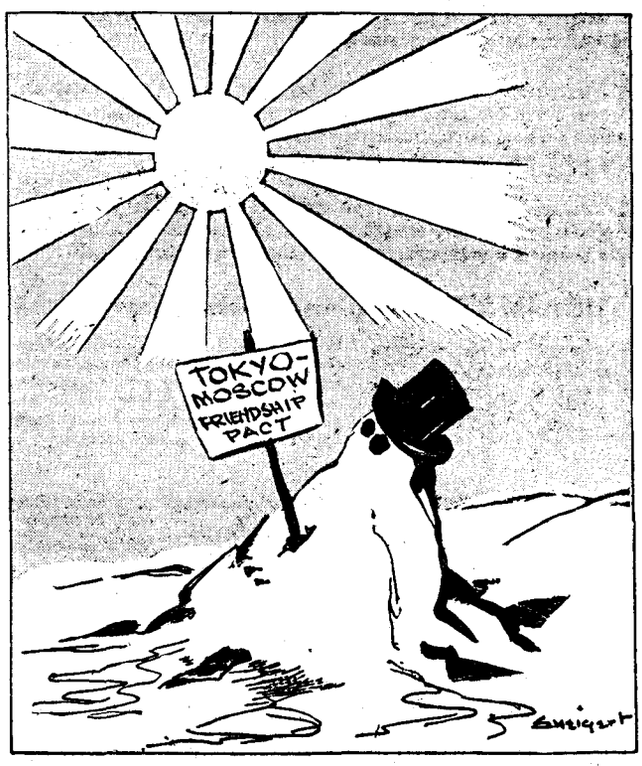
Actually, as Mr. Hindus accurately reveals, the Japs and the Russians have already fought about 2,500 border skirmishes in recent years—some of them good sized battles—and the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact of April, 1941, was only a convenient delaying action. It in no wise changed the long-existing fundamental antagonisms arising out of a "multitude of irreconcilable conflicts between Russia and Japan—economic, political, geographic, social, ideological." Japan aims to paralyze Russia's development and influence in Asia, remove the ever-present threat of a dagger pointed at her throat from Siberia, and control the fabulous resources of that region. At the proper time she will violate the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact as ruthlessly as Hitler broke his Russo-German Non-Aggression Agreement—and with the same consequences.

In 1934, I was the first foreign correspondent to visit the Soviet Union's Far Eastern provinces in four years. I wandered around pretty much at will and came out with a series of preparedness stories which jolted the cocky, know-it-all-Japs. I said then—and repeat—that war between Japan and Russia is a certainty, and I am no less convinced than Mr. Hindus that it will lead Japan to destruction just as surely as Germany is being led to defeat.

Mr. Hindus concedes that "foreign armies may wrest enormous territories from Russia, kill millions of soldiers and civilians, lay waste many Russian lands. Japan may drive Soviet armies to Lake Baikal or even west of this focal dividing line in Siberia. Germany may oust the Soviets from European Russia."

Conceding these improbable absurdities, Mr. Hindus convinces you that Russia will remain indestructable—that its millions of men and women not only have the *will* to fight on and on and on, but also the weapons which are continuously flowing out of the isolated recesses of the Ural Mountains, from mines and factories and arsenals which they built at infinite cost and unimaginable sacrifices. Moreover, Mr. Hindus reveals, conquest of the Arctic has placed at Russia's disposal a supreme military advantage over Japan.

Mr. Hindus's appraisal of the powers at the command of the Russian people in this war of life and death is no more wishful thinking than his careful analyses of Jap ambitions in respect to them. Mr. Hindus's appraisal constitutes an authoritative book which dispells doubts and inspires hopes.



—Sweigert in the San Francisco Chronicle.

How long will it last?

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I Squirm to Recall

STEPHEN LEACOCK

WHEN I was young I had a great fear of doing anything in public and took care never to try to. But through this there came an incident that was very humiliating and made me want to improve.

It was like this. I had saved up money for a trip to England and went over in 1893 on the *Laurentian,* an old-fashioned steamer out of Montreal. There were only nineteen passengers. The rest were cattle.

Then one night they got up an impromptu ship's concert in aid of the Sailors' Home. The chairman announced from the platform that everybody would be asked to do something, and so I thought out some funny remarks about sailors.

But when it came my turn I forgot to say that the remarks were to be funny. Later on, when I became a humorous lecturer, I found that if you are going to be funny you must always say so. But these people couldn't know.

So my talk about sailors, or rather my whispers about sailors was so agonized that it didn't sound funny. It was just insulting. It collapsed in failure and I can feel the humiliation of it just as keenly now, forty-nine years after, as I did then.

So I realized that I must not be again caught unprepared in case I was asked to do something before people. I had in my mind, of course, that there would be a ship's concert coming back.

So in London I bought a book of Recitations. I think it was Mrs. Palmer's "Recitations": I'll admit I know it was.

I selected a poem called "Lasca," all about Texas, down by the Ric Grande. It begins

> I want free life, and I want fresh air;
> And I sigh for the canter after the cattle.

I learned it all through, and I kept saying it over, so as to keep my hold on it. I said it over in Westminster Abbey and in the Tower of London. If any of the people I had letters to, asked me to their houses, I kept repeating in the cab, just in case they asked for a recitation,

> I want free life, and I want fresh air.

But chiefly, of course, I was thinking of the ship's concert.

I took my passage to New York in the *City of Paris.* This was a very grand boat with two hundred saloon passengers and all the luxury of the day. There were many celebrated people, Mrs. Annie Besant the theosophist, and a lot of musical and theatrical stars. At the time they seemed tremendous people to me though now no doubt they would just seem nobody as everybody does to anybody who is seventy-two.

I knew there was going to be a ship's concert because that was the first question I asked the bedroom steward. "Oh yes, sir, always, sir, the last night out; for us sailors, sir." So I said "Thank you" and gave him another fifty cents.

Then I went out on deck and said

> I want free life, and I want fresh air;
> And I sigh for the canter after the cattle.

All the way across I kept running it over. I didn't speak to anyone about the concert but I did say once, perhaps twice, to my one or two humble friends that I knew "Lasca" very well and could recite it.

I had a presentiment that something was going to happen. On the day of the concert a big printed program was posted. But my name wasn't on it nor any "Lasca." I felt half glad and half sorry. It is like that when you are all braced for adventure.

The concert was very grand with everybody in evening dress. I sat in a corner at the back. Mrs. Besant made a theosophical talk. Then all of a sudden in the middle of the program I heard the chairman saying:

Stephen Leacock

> And now, ladies and gentleman, we come to an item of our entertainment which we have not put upon the program but which I know you will enjoy as a special treat. You are to listen to a recitation of the poem "Lasca." Those of us who are Americans know it well and love it and those here who are British will, I am sure, share in our admiration. I won't name the gentleman who is to recite "Lasca" to us, but he is in the audience and I'll just ask him to make his way. . . .

It had come. I got up from my seat and started to move along the side of the saloon towards the platform. It was, I think, the most tense moment of my life. The chairman was going on with some remarks about "Lasca" but I couldn't hear him. I was repeating over to myself

> I want free life, and I want fresh air.

Then I noticed that across the saloon on the other side there was a big, ungainly-looking fellow making his way along just as I was. I thought at first he was just changing his seat but then I realized he was trying to get to the platform, and the people were making way to let him pass. Then I saw the people all looking towards him, and whispering, and breaking out into applause.

I stood still.

The big fellow got to the platform and there was a great burst of applause.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," said the chairman exultingly, "you are going to have the unannounced treat of hearing Mr. De Wolf Hopper recite 'Lasca'."

De Wolf Hopper with perfect poise and assurance put out one arm and said in a resonant voice that filled the room,

> I want free life, and I want fresh air;
> And I sigh for the canter after the cattle.

I had sunk down in an aisle seat. No one noticed me. I had got free life, but I wanted fresh air the worst way.

Basic English in Hollywood

I. A. Richards, chief proponent of Basic English in this country has gone to Hollywood to work in the Walt Disney studio on a project for a series of short films designed to teach English to aliens, immigrants, and foreigners generally. Mr. Richards will work with the aid of Disney artists to illustrate the methods employed by Basic English which reduces the language to 850 words. If the War Department likes the idea, it is said, men in the army whose English is too limited to understand military orders will be instructed by means of the new shorts. Mr. Richards is the author of "How to Read a Page" and of a new Basic English version of Plato's "Republic," both published recently by Norton.

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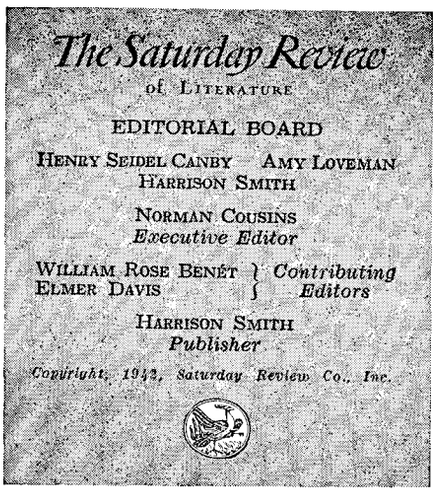

HISTORIANS, WRITERS, AND MILITARY COMMUNIQUES

AN historian and an artist describing an historic epoch have two quite different tasks before them. As an historian would be wrong if he tried to present an historical person in his entirety, in all the complexity of his relations with all sides of life, so the artist would fail to perform his task were he to represent the person always in his historic significance.

For an historian considering the achievement of a certain aim, there are heroes; for the artist treating of man's relation to all sides of life, there cannot and should not be heroes, but there should be men.

An historian is sometimes obliged, by bending the truth, to subordinate all the actions of an historical personage to the one idea he has ascribed to that person. The artist, on the contrary, finds the very singleness of that idea incompatible with his problem, and tries to understand and show not a certain actor but a man.

The historian has to deal with the results of an event, the artist with the fact of event. An historian in describing a battle says: "The left flank of such and such an army was advanced to attack such and such a village and drove out the enemy, but was compelled to retire; then the cavalry, which was sent to attack, overthrew . . . " and so on. But these words have no meaning for an artist and do not actually touch the event itself. Either from his own experience, or from letters, memoirs, and accounts, the artist realizes a certain event to himself, and very often (to take the example of a battle) the deductions the historian permits himself to make as to the activity of such and such armies prove to be the very opposite of the artist's deductions. The differences of the results arrived at is also to be explained by the sources from which the two draw their information.

For the historian (to keep to the case of a battle) the chief source is found in the reports of the commanding officers and of the commander-in-chief. The artist can draw nothing from such sources; they tell him nothing and explain nothing to him. More than that: the artist turns away from them as he finds inevitable falsehood in them. To say nothing of the fact that after any battle the two sides nearly always describe it in quite contradictory ways, in every description of a battle there is a necessary lie, resulting from the need of describing in a few words the actions of thousands of men spread over several miles and subject to most violent moral excitement under the influence of fear, shame, and death.

In descriptions of battles it is generally said that such and such armies were sent to attack such and such points and were then ordered to retire and so on, as if assuming that discipline, which subjects tens of thousands of men to the will of one man on a parade ground, will have the same effect where it is a question of life and death. Anyone who has been in a war knows how untrue that is, yet the reports are based on that assumption, and on them the military descriptions. Make a round of the troops immediately after a battle, or even next day or the day after, before the reports have been drawn up, and ask any of the soldiers and senior and junior officers how the affair went: you will be told what all these men experienced and saw, and you will form a majestic, complex, infinitely varied, depressing, and indistinct impression; and from no one—least of all from the commander in chief—will you learn what the whole affair was like. Two or three days later the reports begin to be handed in. Talkers begin to narrate how things happened which they did not see; finally, a general report is drawn up and on this report the general opinion of the army is formed. Everyone is glad to exchange his own doubts and questionings for this deceptive, but clear and always flattering, presentation. Question a month or two later a man who was in the battle, and you will no longer feel in his account the raw, vital material that was there before.

After the fall of Sevastopol the Commander of the Artillery sent me the reports of the officers of artillery from all the bastions, and asked me to draw up a report from these (more than twenty) separate accounts. I am sorry I did not take copies of them. It would have been the best example of the naive, inevitable, military falsehoods from which reports are made. I imagine that many of my comrades who drew up those reports will laugh on reading these lines, at the recollection of how they, by order of their superior, wrote what they could not know. All who have had experience of war know how capable Russians are of doing their work in a war and how little fit they are to describe it with the boastful falsity indispensable for that purpose.

I say all this to show the inevitability of falsehood in military description which serve as material for military historians, and thus to show how unavoidable are frequent disagreements between artists and historians in their understanding of historical events. . . . But an artist must not forget that the popular conception of historical persons and events is not based on fancy but on historical documents in as far as the historians have been able to group them, and therefore, though he understands and presents them differently, the artist like the historian should be guided by historical material.

LEO TOLSTOY.

The above guest editorial is from an epilogue, written in 1868, to "War and Peace." The edition of this novel from which this is drawn has just been published by Simon and Schuster.

Threnody

By Robert Nathan

LOOK to your destiny, Oh Rome,
That from the earliest years
Has wet the world in tears,
Whether for Titus or Saint Peter's dome.
Are these your brigadiers,
This aryan horde, half myth, half Esquimaux,
Like dark Attila fed
On the world's dread,
And man and woman's woe?
How like the morning mist
Has vanished triumph now;
Where are the laurels for the Roman brow,
The marble for the dead?
And name her generals: Yamashita, List,
Haruba, Reichenau!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unpublished Thoreau Letter

SIR:—The following letter, written by Henry David Thoreau in his capacity of secretary of the Concord Lyceum, has never been published. It was addressed to Elizabeth Oakes Smith, an advocate of women's rights and one of the earliest woman lecturers in America.

Mrs. Smith had lectured in Concord in 1851, and Dr. Canby, in his recent Thoreau biography, pointed out Thoreau's annoyance with her on that occasion. Here is what Thoreau confided to his Journal about her then: "I carried her lecture for her in my pocket wrapped in her handkerchief; my pocket exhales cologne to this moment. The championess of woman's rights still asks you to be a ladies' man. I can't fire a salute, even, for fear some of the guns may be shotted. I had to unshot all the guns in truth's battery and fire powder and wadding only."

The original letter is part of my Thoreau Collection.

DANIEL J. BERNSTEIN.
730 Park Avenue,
New York City.

Concord, Feb. 19" '55

My Dear Madame,

I presume you will like an early, though it should be an unfavorable, answer to your note. After due consultation and inquiry, I am sorry to be obliged to say that we cannot make it worth your while to come to Concord at this season. The curators of the Lyceum, before which you lectured three years ago, tell me that they have already exceeded their means—our N. E. towns are not so enterprising as some Western ones, in this respect—and Mr. Foster's society, which used to be our next resource, furnishing a meeting house and an audience, no longer exists. He is settled in Princeton, in this state.

Mrs. Emerson sends love, and wishes me to say that she would be glad to have you spend a day or two with her after Mr. E's return, which will probably be before the middle of March—*and she will not forget that you have a lecture on Margaret Fuller* in your bag.

I remember well meeting you at Mr. Emerson's, in company with Mr. Alcott, and that we did not fatally disagree. You were fortunate to be here at the same time with Mr. A. who diffuses sunshine wherever he goes. I hear that he says the times are so hard that the people cannot have him to converse. Are not those *hard* times indeed?

As for the good time that is coming, let us not forget that there is a good time *going* too, and see that we dwell on that eternal ridge between the two which neither comes nor goes.

Yrs. truly,
HENRY D. THOREAU

(The following note, signed "E.O.S.", appears at the foot of the letter: "Addressed to Elizabeth Oakes Smith, who was lecturing in Mass. at the time.")

"BINGO!"

Dryden Song and Wesley Hymn

SIR:—The names of John Dryden and Charles Wesley have seldom been paired; but one of the latter's best-known hymns gives strong indication that Wesley must have been familiar with Dryden's "King Arthur" or an imitation of a song from that play. The first verse of Wesley's familiar hymn "Love Divine" is an astonishingly close verbal echo of Dryden's "Song of Venus" from "King Arthur."

SONG OF VENUS

Fairest Isle, all Isles Excelling
Seat of Pleasures, and of Loves;
Venus here will chuse her Dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian Groves.

Cupid, from his Fav'rite Nation,
Care and Envy will remove;
Jealousy that poysons Passion,
And Despair that dies for Love.

LOVE DIVINE

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
All Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

It resembles also a two stanza imitation of Dryden entitled "The Happy Man," (given in C. L. Day, "The Songs of John Dryden," 177-178).

Happy Hours, all Hours excelling,
when retir'd from crowds and noise;
Happy is that silent dwelling,
fill'd with self-possessing Joys.
Happy that contented Creature,
who with fewest things is pleas'd,
And consults ye voice of nature,
when of roving fancies eas'd.

Only the first verses exhibit exact parallels, but the meter and the rhyme scheme of Dryden's and Wesley's poems are the same. Dryden's words may be sung with ease to the familiar hymn tune, but with a rather startling effect.

ALFRED OWEN ALDRIDGE.
Duke University,
Durham, North Carolina.

Justice for H. L. Wilson

SIR:—Perhaps I should not take issue with either Bernard De Voto or Wallace Stegner (or both) on the question of whether or not Mormonism is too big for a novelist to handle, but the first paragraph of Mr. Stegner's review of Virginia Sorensen's "A Little Lower Than the Angels" [*SRL*, May 9, 1942] ignores a great American writer who never gets justice in print from anybody but Tarkington, Rascoe, and myself, and that makes me sore.

The writer: Harry Leon Wilson.
The book: "Lions of the Lord."
The subject: Mormonism.

Like Miss Sorensen's book, it was a first novel. May I suggest that Mr. De Voto, Mr. Stegner, Miss Sorensen and all readers of *The Saturday Review* go to second-hand bookstores and buy that same?

TIFFANY THAYER.
420 Lexington Avenue,
New York City.

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The Looting of Peru

BROTHERS OF DOOM: The Story of the Pizarros of Peru. By Hoffman Birney. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1942. 314 *pp., and index.* $3.

Reviewed by CARLETON BEALS

ONLY a brave man, or a foolhardy one, would risk comparison with the scholarship, literary skill, and dramatic genius of William Prescott, by retelling the conquest of Peru. Fortunately no comparison with Prescott's great classic is required in the present instance. Mr. Birney, making no claim to specialized research or originality, has sought to provide us with an accurate popularization of one of the most thrilling episodes in the long annals of imperial aggression. He has taken the full-bodied fruit of Prescott, squeezed out the narrative essence, added his own tang, and given us the cocktail juice in rapid-fire prose so we can catch the eight-fifteen interurban.

By tearing out the dramatic essence from older chronicles, Birney has succeeded in providing us with the most readable simplified account in English, and I am not forgetting Shay's "Incredible Pizarro." The present author, less interested in the cultural background (though he summarizes it skilfully) or the moralistic philosophizing of Prescott, spurs head on into the fray with as little concern for academic pitfalls and footnotes as anciently Pizarro was unperturbed over the dangers of the lofty Andes.

Birney has gone carefully enough over the early chronicles of Xerez, Cieza de León, Garcilaso, Herrera, Pizarro, and so on, to become thoroughly at ease with his materials. But he apologizes for occasionally differing from his "betters"—Prescott, Markham, and Means. He need not have done so. New facts have come to light since Prescott's day. Besides, unlike Prescott, Birney has been privileged to travel over the old routes of Peru. His keen observation has freshened his account, and he has been able to correct various geographic errors, even some made by the first Spanish chroniclers and subsequently parroted.

Birney is best when he leans on Prescott; he is less satisfactory when he leans on Means. The latter's adoration for feudal caste, his schematic rigidities, and his prejudiced arbitrary conclusions lead straight away from the highway of historical comprehension. Thus Birney, enjoying journalistic exaggeration, gleefully seizes upon Means's angry description of Viceroy Núñez Vela as having "a mentality like that of a lunatic hyena" and harrasses the poor incompetent down to his death in battle near Quito, where he was decapitated, his head exhibited on a pike, and his white beard torn off by Juan de la Torre to make a crest for his helmet. Means, lover of the high-born, is chiefly incensed because the viceroy, in obedience to instructions and the laws, injudiciously liberated three hundred Indian slaves. His sympathies are not with the Viceroy futilely attempting to establish administrative order, but with the lawless Gonzalo, attempting to retain ill-gotten booty.

Here Birney could have better adhered to the more balanced judgment of Prescott. Garcilaso, too, would have aided in perspective.

At moments of great historical transition, individual idiosyncracies become doubly pronounced, yet at no time is history less to be explained by such idiosyncracies. At this great turning point of the Spanish colonies, the bloody violences and looting were about to give way to the necessities of more orderly administration. Many personal reputations were ruined in the process of that change.

The new Viceroy failed, not merely because of his rigid conformity to legal and moral obligations but because he was appointed a few years too soon. He had the impossible task of putting down the last of the glamorous Pizarros, of attempting to clear up fraudulent landtitles, of recovering stolen Crown lands, of emancipating Indian slaves, of putting into force the unpopular "New Laws." At the same times his authority was now circumscribed by intriguing Oidores. He was blocked on every hand, and his own high blood pressure did not lessen his frustration.

The record of his defeat has been written principally by his actual or spiritual enemies from that day to this. But it is strange indeed that certain modern academicians should fail to grasp the historical significance of the poor Viceroy, especially as they do not miss it when they come to the more cunning and successful Gasca.

Gasca, unlike Núñez, invested with absolutist powers, finally put an end to Gonzalo's rebellion; and thereby also put the period to Birney's lusty swashbuckling tale. Gasca's men did away with the last of the Pizzaro brothers; the leaders were beheaded, and the bodies mutilated in ways which Mean's gentility will not permit him to describe beyond "hapless" and "horrid," but which both Prescott and Birney set forth in straightforward prose.

It is too bad that a book requiring such extensive preparation and one so excellently written and organized should have glaring errors in Spanish.

—From the jacket of "Brothers of Doom."

Hawaii, B.P.H.

OUR HAWAII. By Erna Fergusson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1942. 330 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by SARAH CHOKLA GROSS

PERHAPS few Americans were more surprised by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor than Erna Fergusson of New Mexico, who had just finished writing a book about Hawaii. She had found all civilian Honolulu agog over the "Japanese menace," while she visited there, but the naval officers with whom she dined were most reassuring. Only Congress gets excited and makes war, one of them told her. "Then we have to go out and make peace." This was before December seventh.

In "Our Hawaii," the author of "Our Southwest" is actually less concerned with portents of war than with the physical look of flowery tropical isles, the mixture of races living there, and how the people act. She writes of the hula, whose ancient and real significance she set herself to find out; the sensation of looking down into a volcanic crater; the beauty of a pineapple plantation—efficiently run by Americans; and magic still practised. Her chapters on magic and medicine are the most interesting of the book.

As "Our Hawaii," besides skimming the history of the eight islands, names hotels and their management, evaluates the few handicrafts, and has photographs of old churches, plantations and the like, it should be a pleasant guide when traveling to Hawaii is again a possible civilian project.

In *The Saturday Review,* May 9, an error in the Macmillan advertisement listed Elinor Bryor as the author of "And Never Yield." The correct spelling is Elinor Pryor.

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THE ROAD TO DISUNION

(*Continued from page 5*)

baggage, and . . . non-extension had become the abolition movement." In his closing pages Dr. Craven seems to place the blame for secession just as heavily on the North as upon the South.

The fact is that in 1861 the noisy extremists of the North, the Abolitionists, were generally disliked, had little influence, and nowhere occupied positions of power. The noisy extremists of the South, on the other hand, were widely admired, had a large following, and had gained positions of power which enabled them to engineer secession. It is fairly clear—though Dr. Craven does not admit it—that emotionalism had been whipped up to fiercer fury below the Mason and Dixon Line.

Finally, the question remains of the true importance of this emotional distortion as a cause of the war. It counted for much. Given all the other factors, it perhaps tipped the balance. But these other factors, political, social, economic, have to be considered. And the distortion can be exaggerated. The North distorted the picture when it blamed Southerners for slavery, talked cant about their wickedness, and ignored the race-issue underlying the slavery issue. But millions of sane, hardheaded farmers, mechanics, and shopkeepers of the North saw clearly and accurately when they declared they would never permit slavery to expand over the virgin West; when, voting for Lincoln in 1860, they said "Thus far and not one inch further!" The South distorted the picture when it pictured the North as eager to foment servile revolts, to confiscate billions of dollars worth of slave property, and to raise the black man to equality with the white. But a host of Southerners saw clearly and accurately when they decided in 1860 that their section was now firmly fixed in a minority status, and that with all the forces of the age against them, slavery would presently be put by the majority on the road to ultimate extinction. In short, the nation had arrived at a showdown. Perhaps secession and civil war came not because of distortion, but because both sides saw certain realities so clearly. If only the excited South could have seen beyond the realities of the moment to those of Appomattox!

Dr. Craven's book is a biased and partial treatment of a very complex phase of American history. But it is full of fresh material, it throws much new light on public feeling 1830-1860 and the forces which produced it, and it compresses a vast deal of erudition into a concise and often beautifully written exposition.

"Drop in some morning about 10:30, McGinnis,

and I'll show you a traffic jam!"

"Sure, Mac, I know—you run up against parades, football crowds—and a World Series now and then. But we're handling traffic jams every day.

"This war is taking some of the traffic off your beat and putting it on mine—taking it off the streets and putting it on the telephone lines.

"And we're getting short of materials. The stuff that used to make switchboards and cables now goes to the shooting part of the war.

"But we've found the public good-natured and helpful just as you have. The trouble began with Hitler and will end when we finish with him."

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PRESCRIPTION FOR THE REST PERIOD

(*Continued from page 4*)

know that even the more attractive of them seem less like human beings than like noble cats. Nevertheless the publishers have managed to stir up about this book what the Double-Crostics editor would probably call a towrow.

"Islandia" appeals only to a peculiar taste, but to that taste its appeal is very strong. The answer, I suppose, is that Austin Wright lived in this dream world so long and so completely that he can make it come to life as vividly for the reader as he did for himself. The formula is of no value to the professional writer, who cannot afford to spend a lifetime creating a single scene and set of characters, however elaborate; but it does give him a salutary object lesson, does point out the road he had better follow as far as he can. Austin Wright believed his own story, and lived in it so long that he was able to create a world that seems to the reader to have independent and objective existence. Now, Wright might never have been able to make himself believe another story; and in any case, merely to believe your own story (though a necessary prerequisite) is not enough. Anyone who ever read and rejected fiction manuscript knows that the most hopeless writers almost always believe their own stories, and love them. But given a certain amount of talent, the complete immersion of the writer in the world he is creating is probably the best guarantee that a certain number of readers will be able to immerse themselves in it too.

The late Gilman Hall, one of the best fiction editors of his own or any other time, used to maintain that the primary prerequisite of a fiction writer was what he called vivacity of visualization. Wright had that; Islandia is a strange world, but he realized it so completely that presently the reader finds that that is the world he is living in. And that may be the explanation of the success (of esteem, anyway) which has come to "Don Pedro and the Devil." Edgar Maass who wrote it was once a successful author in Germany; but for fifteen years he has lived in this country, working as a chemist, and this is his first American novel. It deals with a picturesque enough period—the sixteenth century in Spain and the New World, but a period which means little to most Americans and which to American Protestant tradition is definitely antipathetic. The conquistador about whom much of the action revolves is Pizarro, the least attractive of them all; and with all the framework of a magnificent adventure story the author treats the adventure as incidental to the relation of the human soul to God. It is a success story which debunks success, but that type has lately become familiar (incidentally some readers must have been worried by the fact that after the hero had got right with God it seems to have been all right for him to keep the money); it is almost as talky as "Islandia," and if some readers can take ten pages of talk about the relation between man and God more easily than ten pages of talk about the relation between man and woman, that may be a function of age. Yet a good many people have read this book, and kept on reading it for six-hundred-odd pages. Why? Perhaps because Mr. Edgar Maass so buried himself in the world he was creating, was so profoundly convinced of its importance, that it becomes the world you live in too while you are reading the book.

Not the whole answer, of course; you need the technical skill too. But it looks as if the technical skill will produce the best results only when the author says to the reader, "Be damned to you; this is what I am writing about and you don't have to read it if you don't want to." After which you may find that you can listen at almost any length to Las Casas on the soul, or even to Dorna on the emotions. This is a hard saying; the writer who works for a living can seldom permit himself this protracted soaking, what with a publisher demanding copy in time for the October market, and perhaps a magazine editor demanding the next instalment of the serial by a week from Monday. But hard as it may be, it seems to point the way to the formula for writing real literature of escape—literature that can take you out, for a while, of this tumultuous world only if it takes you into another world, completely realized and of a certain intrinsic consequence. We are going to see a good deal of second—and third-rate escape literature, which is likely to provide no escape; but the search for real escape literature may eventually lead us to that objective, stated long ago and never realized, of fewer but better books.

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4. Sidney Lanier.
5. William Cullen Bryant.
6. Michelangelo.
7. Sir Philip Sidney.
8. Robert Burns.
9. Sir Walter Raleigh.
10. François Villon.
11. Lorenzo de Medici.
12. John Donne.
13. Walt Whitman.
14. James Russell Lowell.
15. Gabriele d'Annunzio.
16. David, King of Israel.
17. Vachel Lindsay.
18. William Morris.
19. Omar Khayyam.
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Centenarian Resort

VAUXHALL GARDENS. By James Granville Southworth. New York: Columbia University Press. 1942. 199 *pp., and Index.* $2.75.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

FROM Walpole and Pepys who misbehaved there to Thackeray who made Joe Sedley misbehave, Vauxhall Gardens has a long literary history. Singers, dancers, masters of ceremonies, lords and ladies, cits and cads, simpletons and snobs, pickpockets, pimps and harlots gathered there to entertain and be entertained, to waste and to be robbed. The great firework spectacles were never excelled by the best efforts of the Crystal Palace; and Madame Savui who danced, in a blaze of flame, on a tight-rope must have been pretty startling to draw a hundred guineas a week—something near one thousand and five hundred dollars if the value of money a hundred years ago is taken into account.

Mr. Southworth's essay is on the whole very well done. He has had access to materials in the Bodleian and the Widener Memorial Library, and used them with sense and discretion. He has not overloaded his book with references, and gives an adequate enough bibliography, though it is odd not to include Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" as well as "Pendennis." His style is rather uneven, and occasionally he betrays a lack of acquaintance with his period. Of the various oddities who performed in the gardens I think I would soonest have seen—for a short time—"the chin-melodist" who performed several airs upon his chin to the accompaniment of the band"; I wish Mr. Southworth could have told us what instrument the performer used.

An end came to Vauxhall Gardens in 1859—but before that the centenarian resort was senile, grubby, and out-at-elbows. One of the most mysterious happenings in the Victorian age is the gradual disappearance of all London's open-air taverns, entertainments, and amusements. Few people now alive, except students, know that London at the beginning of Victoria's reign and for some years afterwards had as many out-of-door eating places as Paris. Suddenly the habits of the people altered. There was no change in climate—London was always a rainy city; but in a generation it became unfashionable for the aristocracy and gentry to eat in public; the middle-class aped their betters, and soon saw to it that the working-class should not enjoy what they had given up. No book known to me gives a satisfactory explanation.

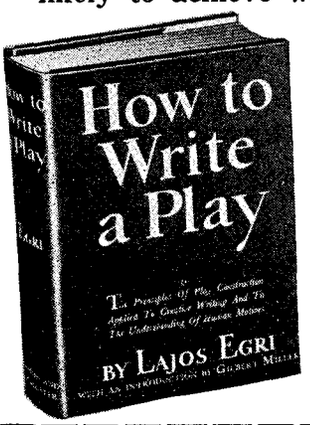
Memo to writers:

RE: A Very Good Book, with a Very Bad Title

ELEVEN people on the staff of this particular publishing house are published writers. All eleven have for some time been in quite a lather about a book we've recently published which we think will become a classic among books on creative writing.

But we made a definite publishing error. We gave the book a misleading title—*How To Write a Play*. We called it that because the author uses plays as illustrative material for his stimulating discussions of writing construction and character.

Writers, reviewers, and lovers of books in general who stumbled on the book in spite of the misleading title have been quick to point out the mistake and to say that it deserves a far wider circulation than it is likely to achieve with the present limited-interest title. So we'd like to suggest that, if you are in any way interested in becoming a better writer, whether of novels, short stories or anything else—please clip the coupon below and look through *How To Write a Play*. Just leafing through it will prove how valuable it will be to you — and how we muffed titling it.



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The Phoenix Nest

The Ghost That Got Married

ONE of the strangest of love stories is based upon historical fact and resembles in some details Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." It concerns Ginevra degli Almieri, a gentle lady of Florence in the fourteenth century. It is a tale that some modern novelist, with psychological insight into the ways of hysteria and dementia praecox, could considerably illuminate. It is also one that enthralled Italian historians of the past, caused Leigh Hunt to write his drama, "A Legend of Florence," and appears in one of the books of that extraordinary American writer and actress of the nineteenth century, Anna Cora Mowatt, who gave us also the farcical social comedy of "Fashion."

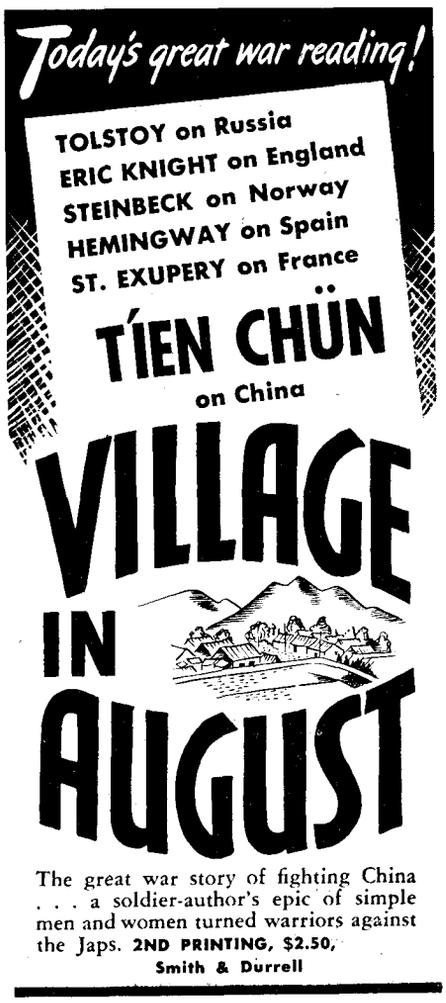
Feuds between families in Florence and elsewhere in Italy were matters of course in the Renaissance. The Montagues and the Capulets were not the only factions, by any means, who proudly repulsed each other. So when Antonio Rondinelli became extremely enamoured of the blonde Ginevra degli Almieri, her father Bernardo turned out to be quite as extremely opposed to him and to all his relatives, even though the Rondinelli were a particularly distinguished Florentine family. Of course, the usual action followed. The lovers were forbidden to meet. The father hurried to affiance his daughter to a wealthy merchant. But in this case the marriage was rushed through, and dizzily soon Ginevra became the vastly reluctant wife of a stout burgher, Francesco degli Agolanti.

That was when the trouble started! Whether consciously or unconsciously, Ginevra began to stage a great show of passive resistance, "of deep dejection and listless apathy," which indeed resulted in making her almost as torpid as a toad in a stone. She reduced herself to a mere robot or zombie who never smiled; until finally the numbskull physicians of that day pronounced her the victim of a mortal malady. This, as she was completely sold on Antonio, and no one could ever take his place, must have entirely and utterly satisfied her.

Anyway, though her husband held on for four years, at the end of that time she "one day fell into a swoon," and soon enough "her fair body was laid upon a shelf," meaning that they carried her—not to the Capulet receiving vault—but to the family vault of the Agolanti in the Duomo cemetery. She had swallowed no potion that would make her unconscious for forty hours, as did Juliet. Ginevra was unconscious from natural causes by that time, so much so indeed that she had been pronounced dead. As the funeral procession departed, the slab against the mouth of the tomb was not quite put into place. That was to be done next day. White moonlight streamed into the tomb, and showed Ginevra *hors de combat* among the crumbling bones of her husband's ancestors. She was, in fact, in a cataleptic trance, though she would not have called it that, and didn't know it.

Since those days an antique street that ran from the Duomo used to bear the grisly name of *Via della Morta* or Street of the Dead. This is why. Ginevra suddenly woke in horror from her trance, sat up gurgling and screaming, managed somehow to get past the stone at the mouth of the tomb, and scampered trailing her long shroud down that narrow thoroughfare, seeking with ghastly face, pop eyes, and waving draperies, the house of her obtuse husband. There Francesco, roused by a sudden clamorous knocking, stuck his nightcapped head out of the window only to be terrified by an apparition of his late wife gesturing to him spectrelike from below. Crossing himself rapidly, with a wild yell he dived under the bedclothes, and began gabbling some sort of *De Profundis*. Ginevra felt a quick throb of satisfaction in a heart that was once again taking up its proper business of beating, and another when an almost precisely similar performance took place in front of her father's house in the Mercato Vecchio. She wanly beamed, for she was determined that her next stop would be the Piazza San Lorenzo "where dwelt Antonio Rondinelli"!

Antonio didn't let her down. He wasn't scared, and he didn't bury his head in the bedclothes. He was extremely glad to see her, and it was hardly a moment after he caught sight of her, even in her dilapidated state, before she was sitting in his house, in front of a cheerful fire and sipping a hot toddy. He bound his whole family



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Sic Semper Tyrannis

By Joseph Auslander

HIGHER than falcons, nor with less disdain,
Climbs the courageous fury of the mind,
Not hindered by the bars that vex the brain,
To habitations pure and unconfined;
No barnyard strutter from his throne of dung
Rules his constricted kingdom like this lord,
Whose talon tears apart the coward's tongue,
Who carries in his beak the burning word.

Ask the canals of Amsterdam, the streets
Of Paris, ask the factories of Prague,
And they will show you how the spirit cheats
The firing squad, the snufflings of the hog,
And rises in proud air on great wing-beats
Where in the moon's glare howls the hunnish dog.

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to an oath of silence, which Ginevra enjoyed (her blonde beauty rapidly returning to the flush of youth and commonsense), sent a servant *pronto* to put the stone back in place at the vault, and had his mother tuck the girl into bed for a few days. Then they all did a little praying.

Of course her husband and her father promptly spread the greatest ghost story that Florence had listened to for many a long day. They ordered up an infinite number of masses for the repose of a spirit so restless that it was even now sitting on Antonio's knee in his own mother's house, or anyway managing a mighty quick convalescence. Agolanti, her husband, it turned out, was "impelled by a sordid love of gain," and proceeded to offer all Ginevra's gowns and jewels for sale. Whereupon Antonio attended the auction and bought up everything in sight. That didn't place him under suspicion. His passion, even for the memory of her he had loved, was well known. It was simply regarded as very gallant of him, so long as his ducats were good.

Naturally Ginevra, with her looks, couldn't remain hidden away for ever. Even Antonio saw that. Besides, he was—now that they had been "privately united by the public notary who was bound to secrecy"—bursting with pride of his beautiful bride. So they went strolling eventually in the Boboli Gardens, and people they had known began to drop things on the paths in their flight from the apparition of Ginevra *redivivus*. However, not everybody fled, and to those who stayed Ginevra told the truth—and all about her cowardly husband and father and everything.

Probably you won't believe the ending! Francesco degli Agolanti started suit at once, and Ginevra and Antonio went before the ecclesiastical court. Outside, an enthusiastic Italian populace—always intensely romantic—were *brava-bravissima*-ing the happy pair, and biting their thumbs violently at Agolanti and Bernardo. The lawyers on both sides went to work, waving their arms and overworking their vocabularies. And what Mrs. Mowatt, that accomplished dramatist and actress, calls "the outspoken verdict of the many-mouthed public" won the day. The marriage to Agolanti was pronounced splendidly null and the court said Ginevra's new marriage bond was entirely satisfactory and legal. And that, my dear children (if you happen to be called *degli Almieri*) is how your ancestress won her Antonio. More than that, it's the only story in existence, so far as I know, of a ghost who got married and made it stick!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of The Saturday Review. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to an exchange of correspondence, thus also enabling an exchange of reference. Rates: 10 cents per word including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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The Crostics Club

THIS letter comes from Wallace M. Davis, Missoula, Mon. As the aroma of it would evaporate with condensation, I give it entirely with a promise to answer in our next:

"I speak as a battle-scarred veteran of the Double-Crostics when I say I was overjoyed at the inauguration of your 'Crostics Club' column, and I don't necessarily wish bad 'cess to the Personals if I hope they don't often crowd you out, as they apparently did this week.

"For years I have wondered how in heck you make them. Now that you have come out from behind that curtain, couldn't you devote just one column to an exposition of the mechanical process by which you contrive to piece the thing together? I hope it isn't a trade secret, for a frequent remark from other devotees I know is 'they must be awful to think up in the first place.' As I think, Erik Dorn said in Hecht's novel, this is the journalistic era of 'the inside story,' and I vote for a full confession. For one thing, I'd like to be relieved of the feeling sometimes that I'm up against a super-natural assistant that helps you fix things so that I can't even get a toehold. Too, I'm just plain curious as to how you go about juggling the extra h's around so that everything comes out even.

"As far as my own methods of operating are concerned, I'm strictly a catch-as-catch-can guy. I *start* from the reference books. I'm tickled silly when you list a lot of definitions I can use my 'Columbia Encyclopedia' on, or the Bible, or my one-volume Shakespeare; and I'm not above going through all the words in my Collegiate that start with Nu, just on speculation. I figure the odds are against me and the underdog can never be considered unethical. In spite of my low moral standards I'm whipped often enough that I appreciate any aid, however corrupt.

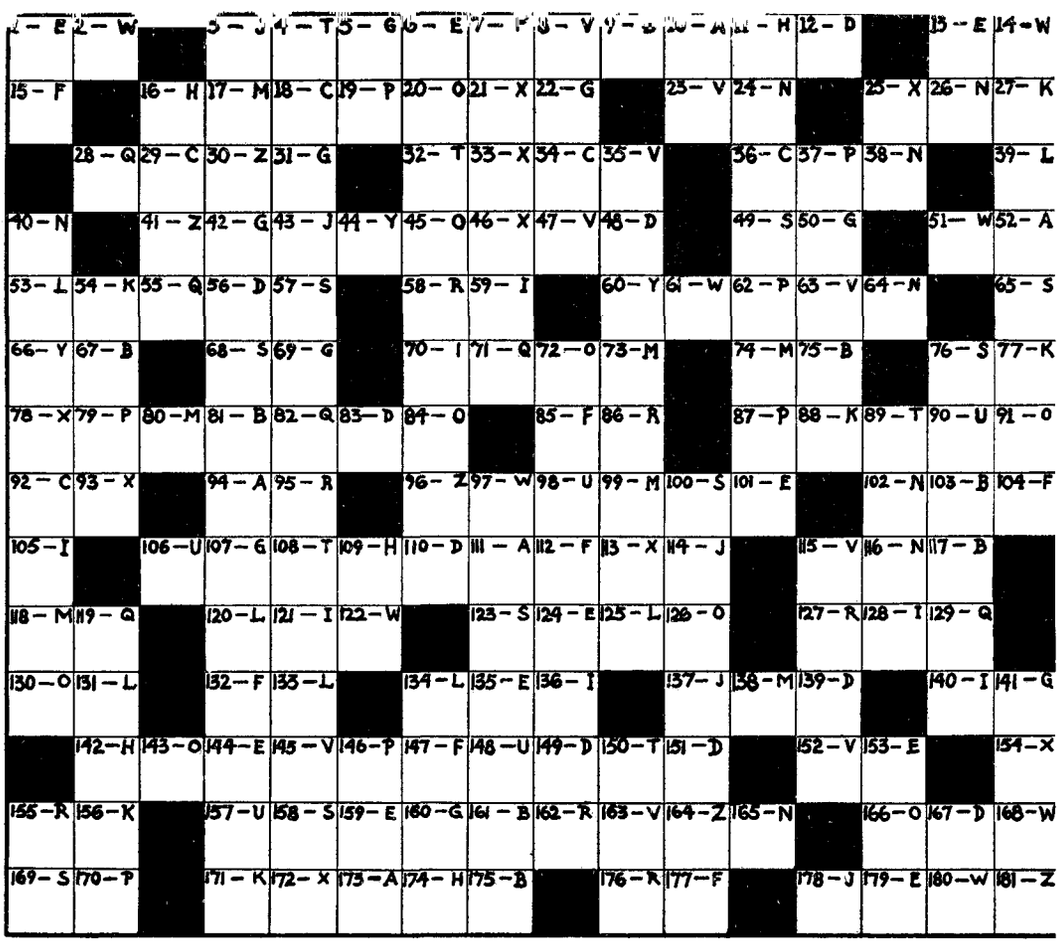
"To get back to the original issue, please divulge some of your creative processes for the edification of us awed patrons."

The courage of Ralph E. Prouty, Garrettsville, Ohio, is worthy of both commendation and imitation. Two years ago he gave up D.C.'s as beyond his ken. Now he writes:

"When I received the Poetry Number a few days ago, I determined to solve the double-crostic or bust. And I did solve it, with the aid of 'The Columbia Encyclopedia,' 'The Century Dictionary,' and my imagination. It was a tremendous moral victory for me.

"Now I'm digging into my file of back numbers of *The Saturday Review,* and intend to crack as many double-crostics as I can."

E. S. K.



DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 427 By ELIZABETH S. KINSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 7 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. The form of the 3rd movement of Beethoven's violin concerto.

B. American woman novelist (1857—).

C. The Southwind (Gr.)

D. Senile; foolish.

E. Author of the novel *The Nazarene* (1939) (full name).

F. Novel by George Meredith (1867); one of Magellan's ships.

G. In or into a state of strife or discord—of a personal nature (phrase).

H. Official notice of *Diocletian* regulating prices and wages, 301 A.D.

I. "The divine breath in man," the soul. (Hebrew.)

J. To omit or suppress from consideration.

K. A husbandman.

L. 18th Century London coffee-house, rival of Will's.

M. Without cessation; tediously (3 wds.)

N. The life history of an individual organism.

O. Playful.

P. A complete ranging forward.

Q. A petty matter (colloq.)

R. Mohammed's steed in journeys to the heavens (Legend.)

S. A cat made famous by an American author (1927).

T. A dye used in making red ink.

U. Applied to an *army* that is mobile.

V. Encroaching; tending to invade.

W. The official country seat of the Prime Minister of England.

X. Act of rubbing together.

Y. Goddess of the heavens (Egypt. Relig.)

Z. To dwarf, cramp, check.

WORDS

10 52 111 173 94

175 67 103 9 161 81 75 117

34 29 36 18 92

12 83 151 139 167 149 110 56 48

153 135 124 101 13 159 179 144 6 1

147 132 177 85 7 15 104 112

107 22 50 42 141 69 160 31 5

11 142 174 16 109

128 136 70 140 59 105 121

114 178 43 3 137

77 171 54 156 27 88

39 53 120 134 131 133 125

17 80 99 74 73 118 138

116 24 102 38 165 64 26 40

45 143 126 20 91 84 72 130 166

146 19 170 37 62 79 87

119 82 129 28 71 55

127 155 58 86 95 176 162

123 158 68 49 57 76 65 169 100

150 89 108 4 32

157 106 98 90 148

163 47 145 152 63 115 23 8 35

51 61 2 97 14 122 168 180

154 113 93 21 46 78 33 25 172

44 66 60

96 181 30 164 41

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TRADE WINDS

THE NEW Ringling Brothers Circus has been completely streamlined by Norman Bel Geddes, and it is a spectacle of breath-taking beauty and endless delight. The sawdust in the arena this year is red, white and blue; the costumes, the pageants, and the girls set new standards; the wild animal acts and aerial displays are more exciting than ever. Some dastard poisoned the circus elephants in Atlanta during the winter, but the management has corralled a fine lot of seductive new pachyderms to fill in the breach. In one department, however, the 1942-model circus is woefully deficient. The clowns are simply terrible. Every year, it seems to me, the clowns have been pushed farther and farther into the background. Today they are nothing more than a stage wait, faltering through their lacklustre routines only long enough to permit paraphernalia for the succeeding acts to be set up. They are as boring and unfunny as the perennial drunks at the booksellers' conventions. To my mind this is a grievous fault, and should be remedied at once. The clowns mean a lot more to a circus audience than Balanchine ballets and Stravinsky music, and that goes for Madison Square Garden as well as Keokuk. The circus has picked a hell of a time to go high-hat on us! Bob Sherwood, a clown from the good old days, and now a prosperous book dealer in downtown New York, could tell them a thing or two about belly laughs! . . . Speaking of which, how many of you have read an unusual book by Charles Finney called "The Circus of Dr. Lao?" The good doctor was something of a wizard in his spare time, and his side-show included several mythological bigshots. One of them was Medusa, and the customers were warned not to look her in the eye lest they be turned to stone. An Iowa skeptic ignored the injunction one day and was promptly transformed as advertised. Her rueful husband started to drag her out of the tent when an attendant rushed up and bawled, "Hey! You can't take that statue out of here!" "That ain't no statue," the man replied angrily. "That's my wife!" . . .

SOME of our best authors and playwrights are spending their time these days in ghost-writing addresses and exhortations for key figures in the Administration. I know one K. F. who has such confidence in his ghost that he no longer even reads his speeches before rising to deliver them. He says that he sounds more spontaneous that way. A late and well-remembered mayor of this town, John Hylan, once tried that trick, however, with disastrous results. He was dutifully reading an address to an audience of ladies when he came to a passage that began "This reminds me of a favorite old story of mine about a farmer and his beautiful daughter." Unfortunately, the mayor had never heard that particular version before in his life, and he laughed so hard when he finished reading it that he broke his eyeglasses and had to sit down. . . .

A SHORTSTORY manuscript recently submitted to Whit Burnett at *Story Magazine* proved to be a rather startling melange of Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Cain, and Saroyan. "Tell me," asked Burnett in his note of rejection, "was your father an anthology?" . . . The American Institute of Graphic Arts has never had a more distinguished show than its current exhibition of the work of the Grabhorn Press. One day I expect to devote a whole column to Ed, Bob, and Jane Grabhorn, and the contributions that they have made to the art of printing in America. . . .

THE AUGUST choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club is "The Just and the Unjust," by James Gould Cozzens, his third book to be so honored by the Club. The Literary Guild selection for August is a first novel by Dorothy Macardle called "The Uninvited." We hear that this was originally intended as one of the lesser publications of the Crime Club list, but that the canny and sometimes daring editor of the Guild, John Beecroft, read advance galleys in such a dither of excitement that it is now not only a Guild choice but a leader on the Doubleday list. Another "Rebecca," maybe? . . . "Islandia" is climbing on the best-seller lists. Credit Farrar and Rinehart for a smooth and subtle promotion campaign. . . . .

TWO NEW STORIES about agents have recently come to my attention. The first concerns two agents who sat together watching a preview of an important picture in a West coast studio One happened to be the agent for the male star of the piece, the other for the female lead. They sat silently while several reels were unwound and then one nudged the other in the ribs. "Look at those two hams up there," he said with some disgust, "getting 80% of our dough."

The other story concerns a flourishing coast agency named Feitlebaum & Garfinkel. One morning Feitlebaum came to Garfinkel and explained that he was sick and tired of his cumbersome and harsh-sounding name. "With your permission," he explained, "I have changed my name this morning to O'Brien." Garfinkel said nothing, but a few mornings later he came to his partner with the declaration that he too was tired of the name he had been bearing all his life. "With your permission," he said, "I have also changed my name to O'Brien." Thereupon, the old sign was taken down and a resplendent new one, reading "O'Brien and O'Brien," was put up in its place. A few mornings later the telephone rang and a voice demanded to be connected with Mr. O'Brien. "Very good, sir," said the cheery-voiced operator, "but which O'Brien do you want: Feitlebaum or Garfinkel?"

BENNETT CERF.

THE LITERARY PULSE . . .

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